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May 28, 2024

Dr. Josh Lepawsky
President, MUNFA
Via Email: munfa.pres@mun.ca; munfa@mun.ca

Dear Dr. Lepawsky,

Thank you for your letter expressing concerns about the implications of the cyber-attack at Grenfell, particularly the upcoming IT outage in the last part of June. The concerns you raised are addressed below.

During the period of June 15-30, there will be an IT outage at Grenfell Campus while teams from Corner Brook and St. John's install the infrastructure required to extend MUNnet across the entire campus. The Office of the CIO has advised that this outage is necessary in order to provide stable and secure networking at Grenfell Campus.

Since May 6, the Grenfell Planned Outage Planning (GPOP) group has been meeting twice weekly, once as large group and once as working groups: operations; research and grad studies; teaching and student services. GPOP has significant representation from ASMs as well as staff members. The purpose of GPOP is to identify the impacts of the outage on employees and students and to find appropriate accommodations in consultation with Grenfell ITS staff and the OCIO.

As a baseline, provided they have an Internet connection, ASMs will be able to access all MUN IT services: for example, MS Office 365 (Outlook, Teams, PowerPoint, Word, etc.), Banner Faculty Self-Service, Brightspace, MyMUN, and Memorial University Libraries. ASMs will also be able to access a number of printers on campus using a memory stick.

During the outage, ASMs will not have access to the following services **on-campus**. Please see identified work arounds/recommendations below:

- MUNnet/internet or use of office computers
- the 'green network' in classrooms, computer labs, and the library
- wifi access through @Memorial or @RESnet
- network printing

IT staff have advised that is not possible to provide precise timelines for the restoration of services; it is best to plan for a full outage for the entire period (10 working days).

Work-arounds/ planning

During the outage, ASMs can work from home, from the Canada House space (3rd floor) in the Civic Centre (hours: 8:30 a.m.- 10 p.m. daily with the exception of June 20), or from the Centre for Research and Innovation for uninterrupted wifi access.

While office computers will not be usable, laptops can access wi-fi through provided Mifis or through cellular hotspots (via cellphones) in campus offices. Reimbursement of data plan overage will be available. Please note the opportunity to indicate the need to borrow a laptop and/or MiFi device during the outage was shared to all employees. Those who have not indicated should contact Grenfell ITS as soon as possible.

It is not the case that ASMs are being instructed to “perform their regular work duties, yet do so without access to any of the IT infrastructure they need to perform those duties.” ASMs have been encouraged to consult with their deans to determine suitable work arrangements. Deans are best placed to address equity issues and have been advised to be flexible. Work-around plans may include a number of options: working from home, working from the CRI or the Civic Centre; engaging in a work ‘slowdown’ focused on activities that do not require on-campus IT (e.g. office organization, readings, etc.); scheduling annual leave during the outage. ASMs have been encouraged to cancel unnecessary committee meetings during this period. Other arrangements are also possible, depending on the needs of individual ASMs.

While ergonomic considerations were not mentioned in the questionnaire sent out for information-gathering purposes, deans will communicate with ASMs to determine if they require accommodation in this area.

For ASMs and student researchers who need to work on campus, there are a number of possible work-around options:

- IT staff will set up MiFi devices at key locations around campus to provide wifi access. ASMs who need to work on campus and require only an internet connection can request such a device.
- There are a limited number of laptops with wifi capability that can be loaned to faculty and staff for the duration of the outage.
- There are a number of laptops that are equipped with VPN capability that allow for MUNnet access through a wireless connection. These will be assigned on a priority basis to ensure of continuity in critical areas (finance, HR, Registrar, School offices) but some laptops may be available to ASMs based on need.
- IT staff have been engaged in consultation with individual ASMs who have identified IT needs for themselves and their hired students to provide accommodations and support during the outage.

There are a number of graduate students who have been delayed in their completion of requirements due to IT requirements; SGS and Grenfell have guaranteed that these students will receive a funding extension until the end of the Fall 2024 semester. While

there will be no financial compensation available, alternate work arrangements for student employees are being investigated.

In regard to the issue of faculty disadvantaged in the tenure process and in grant competitions, there is an MOU currently being negotiated between MUN and MUNFA which provides accommodations for ASMs impacted by the cyber-attack.

The University recognizes that ASMs at Grenfell Campus have been through a very difficult period and worked extremely hard. It is anticipated that the upcoming IT outage will allow us to build a solid IT foundation for the future.

Sincerely,



Neil Bose, Ph.D., FCAE
President and Vice-Chancellor
pro tempore

- c: Dr. K. Jacobsen, Interim Vice-President Grenfell Campus
Dr. P. Ride, Dean, School of Fine Arts/Interim Dean, School of Arts and Social Science
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